CANDLESTICK-SHORELINE PARK

A STATE PARK

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

A STATUS REPORT

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CANDLESTICK SHORELINE PARK - SAN FRANCISCO: A STATUS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In 1973 the long-awaited park along San Francisco's Bay shoreline in the Candlestick Cove/South Basin area moved closer to realization when ten million dollars in State funds were allocated for acquisition and development of "Shoreline Park" as part of the State Park system. Detailed project planning for the park is now required, addressing questions such as:

What should be the character of the new park?
What recreational activities should the park provide?
Where will these activities be located?
How can the quality of existing residential areas affected by park development be enhanced?
How can the vitality of industry affected by park development be strengthened and job opportunities expanded?
How can the transportation and parking needs of residents, industry, and recreation-oriented travelers be accommodated?

This report summarizes the actions taken to date; identifies the problems and opportunities associated with Shoreline Park development; outlines possible solutions to problems; shows how opportunities can be maximized; and illustrates, through a sketch plan one possible scheme for development of the Shoreline Park. This information and the sketch plan are presented to serve as a point of departure for discussion and interaction by the various government agencies and, most importantly, the community. It is hoped that open discussion of issues and broad, cooperative participation can lead to speedy development of this long-awaited park.

PROJECT HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Planning for Candlestick Shoreline Park began in 1966 when the San Francisco Department of City Planning joined with the citizens of the Bayview-Hunters Point district in preparing a plan for their community. Until that time the Bay shoreline in the Southern part of the city had been zoned for industry, and the privately owned tidelands had been proposed to be filled for industrial use as part of a State-authorized reclamation district.

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Candlestick-Shoreline
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With the strong support of the local community and the city at large, the shoreline park proposal first became public policy in 1969, when the South Bayshore Plan was formally adopted by the San Francisco City Planning Commission as part of the City's Master Plan. Subsequently, the park area was included in the citywide Recreation and Open Space Element of the Master Plan. The policy for creation of a shoreline park was reaffirmed when the Board of Supervisors approved the rezoning of a major portion of the area designated for the park, and significant additional endorsement for a park was established by the inclusion of the shoreline park in the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Bay Plan.

State funds were then made available through the efforts of Assemblyman Willie Brown in the form of a $10 million appropriation from the Bagley Conservation Fund. As a result of this appropriation, the State Department of Parks and Recreation is undertaking acquisition of approximately 100 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to Candlestick Park Stadium at the San Francisco-San Mateo County line. This site comprises the last large undeveloped Bay frontage within San Francisco.

As presently delineated, the park encompasses the entire shoreline from the county line on the south to the Naval Shipyard (at Thomas Avenue) on the north. The land mass is centered in the undeveloped area east and north of the stadium parking lot.

Portions of the shipyard shoreline should also be considered for inclusion in the park to the extent this can be done without adversely affecting the industrial and maritime revitalization and reuse of the shipyard. Generally this has been assumed to be a 200-300 foot strip of land southwest of J Street along the shipyard's southern shoreline. This additional section of the shoreline has great recreational potential. The views and the sense of openness and contact with the Bay are quite spectacular, especially at the southeast corner of the shipyard. State policy for park development should include an expression of intent to include this land within the park should it become available.

CONCEPTS FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT

The character and recreational activities of Shoreline Park should be planned in relation to the unique opportunities presented by the park's natural setting on the Bay shore, and the needs of the people to be served.

In terms of setting, the park is physically isolated from developed areas of the city by Bayview Hill, Hunters Point Ridge, and, of course, the Bay. The seclusion is enhanced by the more distant views of McLaren Park and Mount San Bruno. This physical and visual isolation, combined with the expansive view of the open Bay and East Bay hills, imparts a relaxing sense of solitude. In addition, enjoyment of the striking panoramic views and direct contact with the Bay are enhanced by the relatively good weather that is characteristic of the Bayview-Hunters Point district.

Shoreline Park provides the opportunity to meet recreation and open space needs for a great number of San Francisco and Peninsula residents. Residents of neighborhoods east of Twin Peaks, including the Mission, Potrero Hill, South of Market, Bernal Heights, the Outer Mission, Visitacion Valley, and Bayview-Hunters Point, although in sight of the Bay, have no ready access for enjoyment of the Bay as a recreational resource. San Francisco has eight miles of publicly owned beach frontage along the ocean, but Aquatic Park, near the Golden Gate, is the only San Francisco beach on the Bay. While ocean beach frontage is extensive, the summer fog and winds discourage its use, and access is poor from many of the higher-density neighborhoods.

Development of Shoreline Park at South Basin/Candlestick Cove can open the Bay to San Francisco residents for recreational uses including boating, fishing, sun bathing and picnicking, activities that are now very limited within the city and inaccessible to many people, particularly the young and elderly who are dependent on transit, and families with modest incomes.

In order to provide and expand recreational opportunities for inner-city residents and maximize the potential of the Bay location, it would seem appropriate to stress water-oriented development at Shoreline Park. A fishing and boating pier might be developed as a focal point. The pier would be designed to meet the needs of local residents and not as a tourist attraction. Other uses could include tackle shops, restaurants, lockers, boat rental concessions, bicycle rentals, and facilities for rowing and boating facilities, Sea Scouts and other community groups. Development should be scaled to provide for community enjoyment and use of the park. The pier could be open for fishing, and provide mooring for a variety of small craft such as

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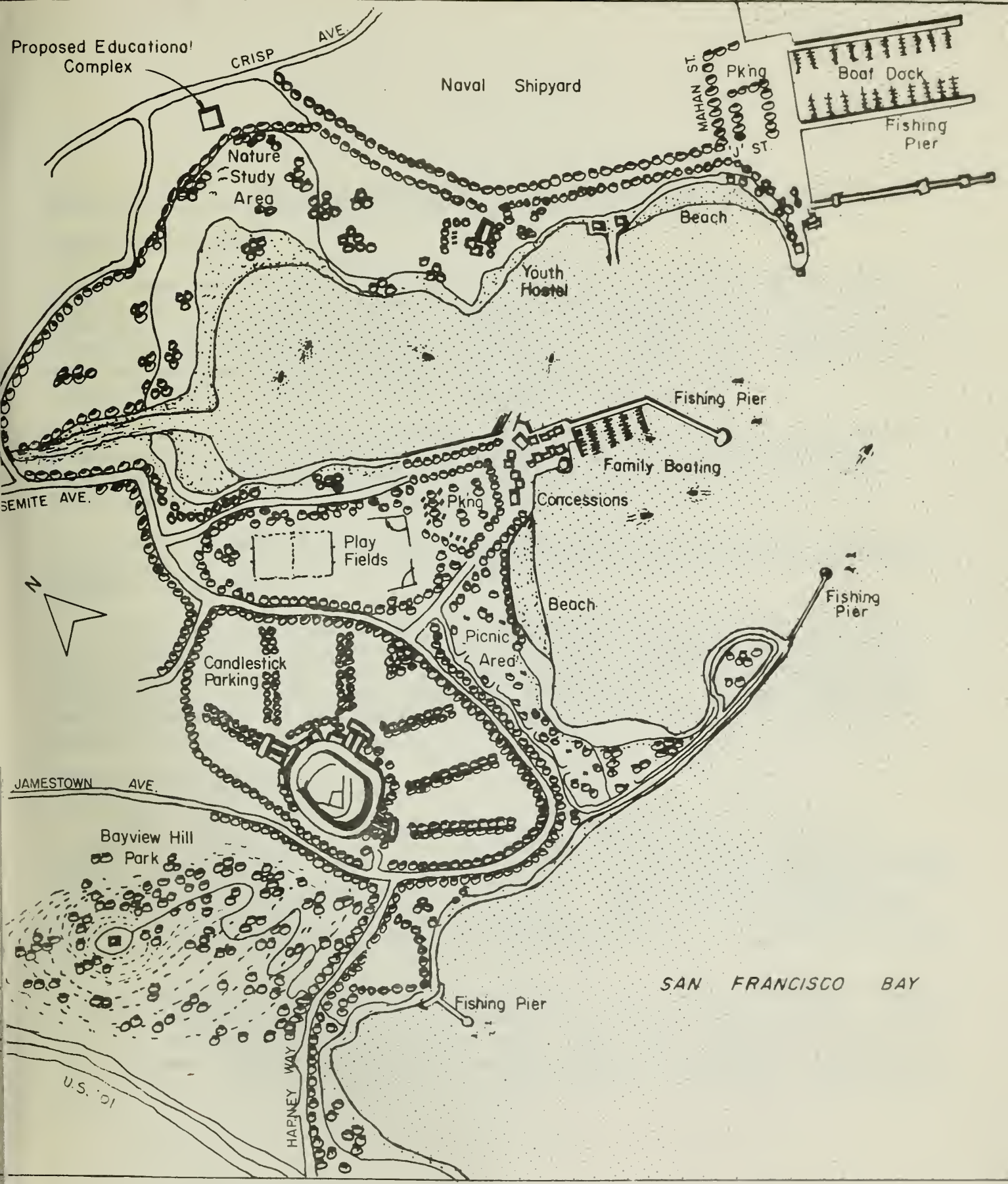
rowboats and small sailboats. The emphasis should be on low-cost rentals. The cove formed by the pier and the narrow peninsula along the county line might be developed as a sun bathing beach. The remaining Bay frontage and park lands might be developed with jogging, cycling and walking paths, picnic areas, and additional access for fishing. Open fields could be developed for active sports such as baseball, football and soccer.

If the park were extended into the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, the mud flats and fill to the north of Yosemite Canal could readily be converted to a nature study area for adults and children by planting native reeds and shrubs. At least five species of aquatic birds, in large numbers, have been observed feeding on the mud flats in the South Basin Cove. Further expansion eastward toward the tip of Hunters Point would provide the opportunity to extend foot and bicycle paths and to reinstate native plant materials, thus screening shipyard industry and adding to the overall natural effect of this setting. The existing enlisted men's housing might be converted to a youth hostel and ecology field school, providing the opportunity for "campers" to stay in San Francisco. Also, interest has been expressed by major educational institutions in utilizing shipyard research facilities for a marine biology/oceanography educational complex. Such an activity would appropriately complement and support park development and conservation efforts and provide a focus for park naturalist activities, particularly if activities of the educational complex were designed to provide for public access as part of a naturalist program.

The existing finger piers at the shipyard could be converted to a marina and fishing pier, providing for a variety of boating-oriented services including repairs, dry storage, fueling and maintenance. A preliminary proposal for such development has been prepared by the State Department of Navigation and Ocean Development.

Development of Shoreline Park as proposed would serve three major purposes for the residents of Bayview-Hunters Point and San Francisco. First, and most importantly, the park would provide recreation opportunities that are currently unavailable to many area residents. Second, the park would result in substantial upgrading of an environment that can currently be characterized as a neglected wasteland of trash and rubble. Additionally, the park and associated activities and services would create job opportunities, and strengthen the economy of the South Bayshore.



SHORELINE PARK-SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SKETCH OF POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF SHORELINE PARK

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RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROJECTED PARK TO ADJACENT USES AND AREAS

Residential Areas

Three residential communities are nearby neighbors of the park. To the north is Bayview-Hunters Point, a community of 8,970 homes. This district groups together the Bayview neighborhood, made up largely of owner-occupied single-family homes, the growing new redeveloped neighborhood on the west end of the Hunters Point Ridge, and the 979 units of public housing on the east end of the ridge.

The Bret Harte neighborhood, often considered a part of the Bayview-Hunters Point community, is the park's closest neighborhood. Bret Harte has approximately 1,014 dwelling units and lies on the lower slopes of the north face of Bayview Hill.

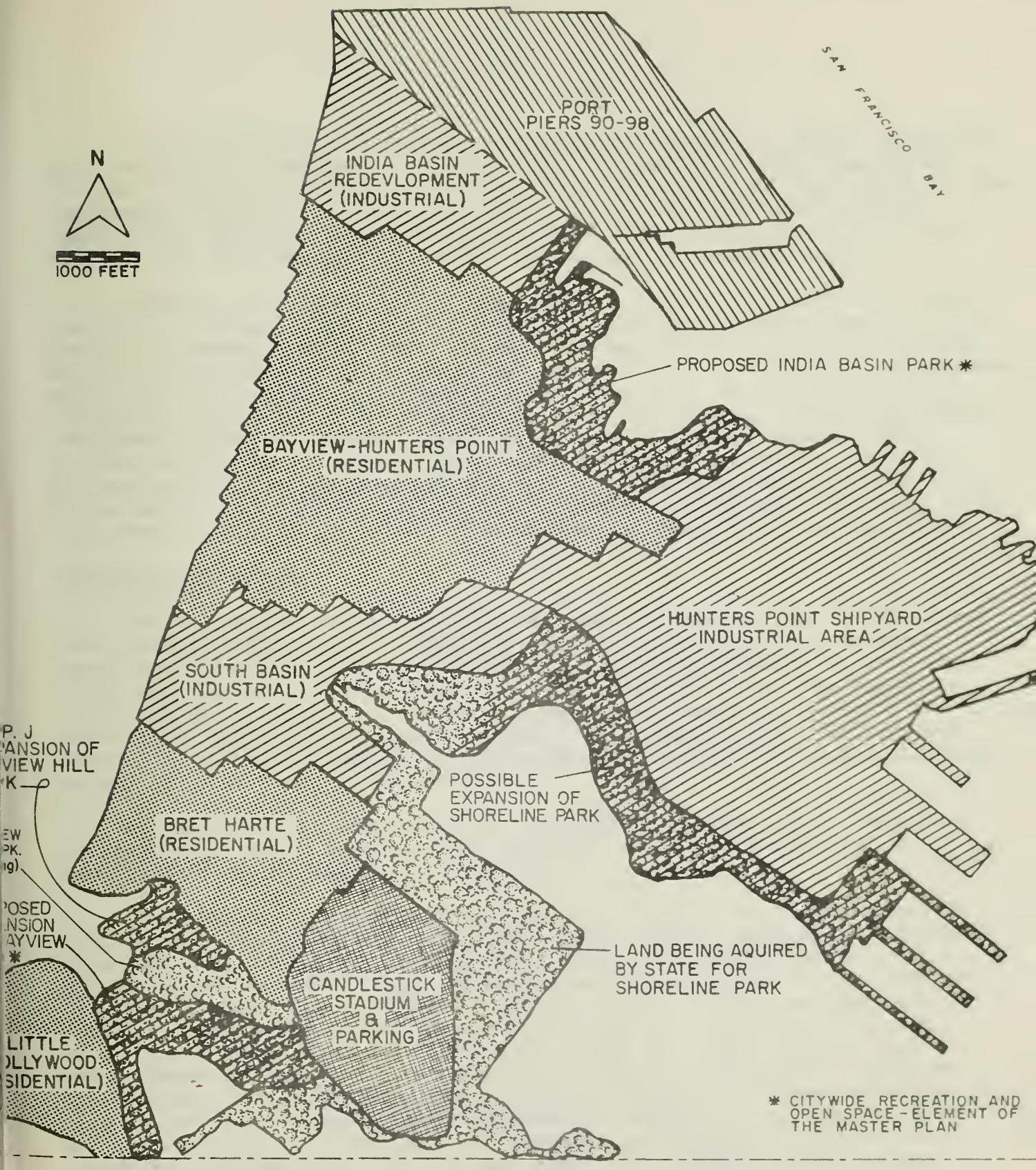
South of Bayview Hill, the park borders the Visitacion Valley community, of which the immediately adjoining Little Hollywood neighborhood is a part.

Existing patterns of land use and circulation tend to separate the residential neighborhoods from the park. As planning for the park progresses, ways should be developed to overcome these barriers and directly link the park with the living areas. In any case, the positive effects of the park's development on the adjoining neighborhoods will be substantial.

South Basin Industrial Area

This area adjoins the park north of Fitch Street. It is presently a marginal area, lacking private investment as well as public improvements. The marked upgrading of the environment by Shoreline Park can also be expected to improve the prospects for this presently under-used industrial district. The extent to which additional residential development should be encouraged is currently being examined by the Department of City Planning.

The Legellet Tannery is the principal use in the industrial strip which separates the Bayview Neighborhood from the park and Bay. The tannery, according to information which they have furnished, has been in business in San Francisco since 1860, has occupied the present site since 1929, and has a payroll of approximately two hundred and twenty five.



SHORELINE PARK-SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND USE

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The land which the tannery occupies is zoned M-1 (light industry) and has been so designated since 1960. Tanneries are not permitted in the M-1 zone. However, in that the use was established prior to the enactment of the 1960 Planning Code, the tannery may continue to operate on the site under the provisions of section 150 of that Code. The use may not expand beyond the limits of its present site.

Although the inclusion of the tannery within the park would make possible a direct connection between the Bayview neighborhood (at the ends of Quesada, Revere, and Shafter Avenues) and the park and shore beyond, the prospect of relocating the tannery is not good. Experience with other industries dislocated within the city in recent years has shown that typically such businesses move out of the city or go out of business entirely. Representatives of the Legallet Company have stated that today's construction costs would most probably make the relocation of their operation infeasible. Planning efforts should be directed to developing an appropriate way to screen this activity from the park so that the two uses can be made as compatible as possible.

Candlestick Stadium

The Shoreline Park's largest neighbor is Candlestick Stadium and its 59-acre parking lot. Capacity crowds for Forty-Niner football games have typically brought more than 13,000 private motor vehicles which are parked near the stadium. The stadium lot can accommodate 7,000 of these vehicles. Another 3,000 cars generally park in the area immediately to the north, bounded by Egbert, Fitch, Gilman and Coleman, the bulk of which is projected for acquisition and inclusion as part of the stadium lot proper.

An additional 1,500 cars park illegally, primarily on lots in residentially zoned areas. The remaining 1,500 cars park along Candlestick Cove, south of Harney Way.

The stadium lot combined with the four-block area to the north could yield significantly more than their present capacity of 8,500 vehicles. Re-stripping of the lots, along with inclusion of the Gilman Street right-of-way, could increase capacity and also improve the flow of post-game traffic. Assuming that this expansion and re-design of the stadium lot proper can bring its capacity to 11,500 cars, there will still be a shortage of up to 2,000 spaces after development of the park and other vacant land in the area. Whether land should be permanently set aside to accommodate these vehicles for five or six days a year is questionable. However, in order to mitigate current conditions, (1) parking lot spaces should be provided in addition to those now existing; (2) further improvements should be made in public transit; and (3) a shuttle system should be initiated to transport patrons to and from other nearby parking areas.

Successful design of the Shoreline Park will in large part depend upon solution of the problem of stadium parking, whether through a separate planning effort or as part of planning for the park itself. Land exchanges between the City and the State, or changes in the configuration of the stadium parking lot, could bring substantial benefits, particularly if a more generous recreational land area is provided.

Bayview Hill

Bayview Hill is directly north of the San Francisco County line, east of Highway 101. A small City park occupies the crest of the hill. Acquisition of properties to the west and north is called for in the Recreation and Open Space Element of the City's Master Plan, as well as in the South Bayshore Plan.

Bayview Park should be considered as a part of the overall recreational development of the area. Improved access and policing are the main concerns, rather than development, for much of the park's value is in its relatively natural condition and panoramic hilltop views. Landscaping of the scarred southern slope of the hill is also a key to the improved character and appearance of the Candlestick Cove area. Means for linking Bayview Park with Shoreline Park by a trail system should be considered.

Executive Park

A privately-owned site of approximately 50 acres adjoins the park at Candlestick Cove, south of Bayview Hill. The San Francisco Master Plan has contemplated low-to-medium density residential development for the site, together with supporting commercial uses. Approval is now being sought by developers of a proposed office complex on the property, to be named San Francisco Executive Park. Criteria for review of this proposal include its compatibility with the park. Acceleration of the process of planning for the park would aid in planning for this adjoining area, which, if developed, will have important relationships to the park.

Tidelands

The tidelands in South Basin, south of the extension of Bancroft Avenue are owned by the Federal Government as part of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Transfer of this area to State ownership for inclusion in the park would be desirable in order to enhance and protect the natural open space setting of South Basin Cove.

East of the park -- in the triangle formed by the shoreline, Bancroft Avenue, and the County line, and in the portion of Candlestick Cove that is within the City and County -- the tidelots are in private ownership. These tidelots are under the jurisdiction of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). The BCDC Bay Plan proposes this area for open water. Although within the project area for the park, these tidelots, under some 36 various owners, are not presently designated for acquisition by the State.

Hunters Point Shipyard

The Hunters Point Naval Shipyard was officially closed on June 31, 1974. The City has worked out an arrangement with the Federal Government whereby the Navy will retain title to portions of the shipyard, but make the shipyard available through lease to local agencies or private industry. This approach should expedite reactivation of the shipyard and resumption of its role as a major provider of jobs in the local economy. The Mayor's Office of Economic Development is responsible for marketing and reuse of this facility.

On October 31, 1974, the San Francisco Planning Commission adopted policies to guide conversion of the shipyard to civilian uses. These policies were based on an analysis of resue potential prepared by the consultant firm of Sedway/Cooke. As related to the Shoreline Park, these policies provide that:

> The Southern Shoreline of the Shipyard should be developed as a public park, extending the Candlestick Shoreline Park into the Shipyard.
>
> This park should complement and extend the character of the Shoreline Park now under study for the South Basin and Candlestick Park area immediately adjacent to the Shipyard. The Park should not compete for facilities which are more appropriate to the larger open areas proposed near Candlestick Park.
>
> Facilities might include walking and biking paths, sitting areas, a boat launch ramp, turfed play fields and picnicking areas.

Although it has been a continuing policy that the Southern Shoreline of the Shipyard be devoted to open use, the nature and extent of public access to this area was not clear while the Yard remained in military use. Further, no more than a tenuous link with the Candlestick Shoreline Park to the south was possible so long as Fitch Street remained the alignment of the Hunters Point Freeway.

In greatly reducing the scale of this trafficway and in realigning it to the west, it is possible to provide a continuous Shoreline Park extending unbroken from the county line to the finger piers at the southeast corner of the Shipyard. This additional Bay frontage will greatly enhance and augment the park to the south and will not usurp land with industrial potential.

A public marina should be developed at one of two possible locations within the Shipyard.

There are two potential areas for marina development. The first is the southeast (finger pier) corner of the Shipyard. This would be the preferred location if it appears that the piers are not likely to be needed for substantial maritime industrial uses generating a significant number of jobs. The second potential area is the tideland area within the Shipyard boundary, east of Fitch Street adjoining the Southern Shoreline. Complementary and ancillary uses should be located adjacent to the marina, including marine-oriented services, food service, parking and possibly boat sales shops.

As appropriate, buffer the Shoreline Park and Marina from adjacent uses with landscaping, mounds and/or fencing.

Extend the existing City Bike Route from the South Basin area, through the proposed Shoreline Park and the Shipyard to the India Basin area.

The extent of land within the shipyard to be allocated to park use, and the mechanism whereby the transfer can be accomplished, must be arrived at through a cooperative planning effort between those working to reactivate the shipyard and the park planners.

It should also be noted that the San Francisco Port Commission and the Mayor's Office of Economic Development have recently issued a proposal to develop "deep water maritime facilities" at the Hunters Point Shipyard. As essentail component of this proposal requires the development of new rail access for train operations involving container and bulk cargo movements. The impact of the new rail access on park development and use must be closely examined.

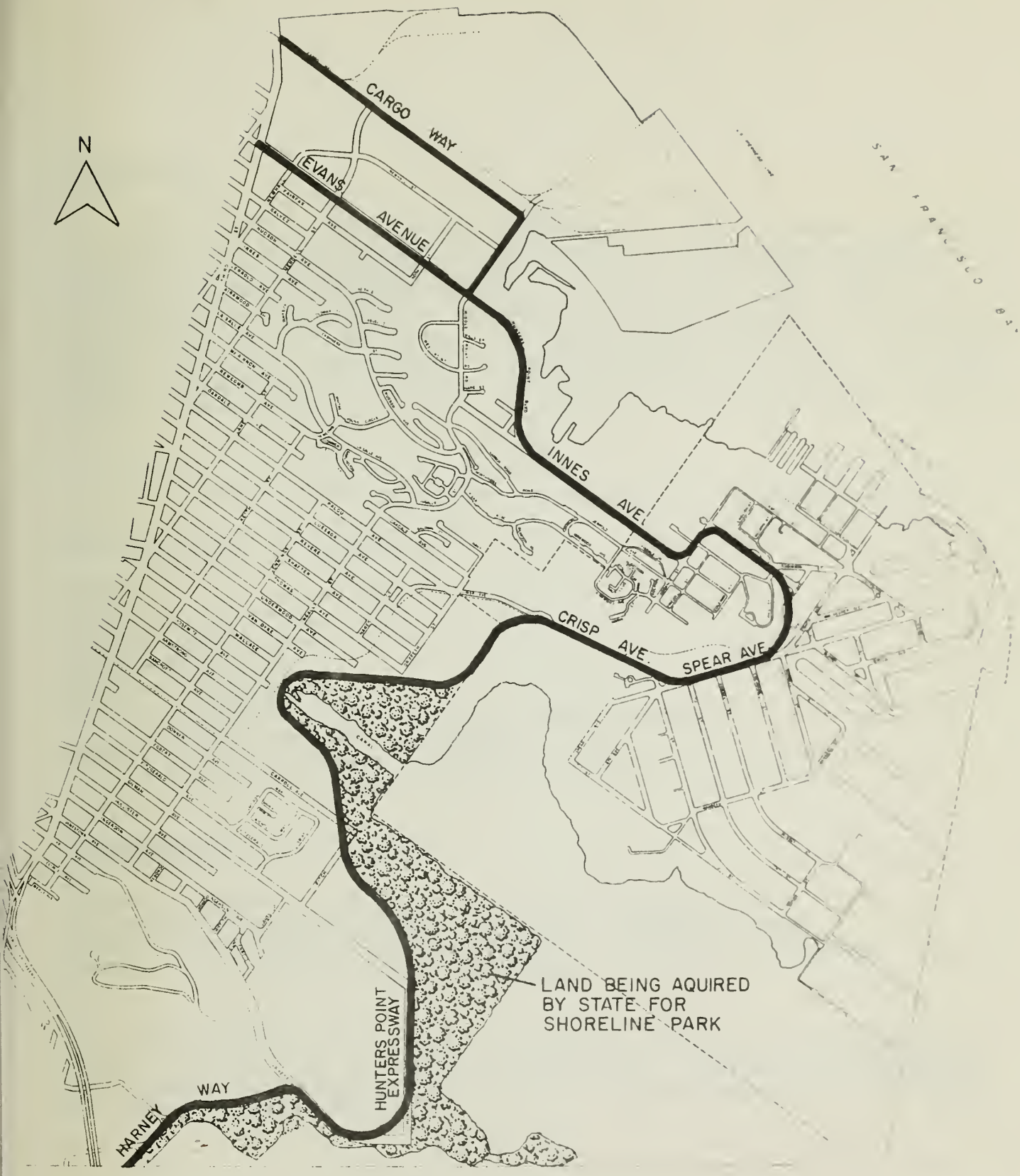
CIRCULATION

A circumferential roadway should form the boundary between the park and neighboring landward uses. Portions of this roadway are already in existance -- Harney Way, Jamestown Avenue Extension, and Hunters Point Expressway. As a number of unrelated land uses will adjoin the park, including established industries and the broad stadium parking lot, the roadway should serve to define the boundary and provide a buffer separating these uses from the park and Bay.

It would be desirable to link South Basin and India Basin by means of a roadway around Hunters Point Ridge in the shipyard. This would substitute for the tunnel or cut through Hunters Point Ridge that the freeway would have required.

The Hunters Point Freeway, though still an official project on paper, was made unnecessary by the decision not to build the connecting Southern Crossing bridge. Steps are now being taken to remove the official freeway designation for this route. Such a freeway would have introduced heavy traffic, usurped a large amount of land, and isolated most of the area from the Bay. Although relieved of the threat of the freeway's negative impact, the district has been left with a number of serious traffic problems -- particularly the intrusion of traffic into residential areas and the heavy traffic on Third Street, the shopping area for Bayview-Hunters Point.

Construction of a circumferential roadway making the same linkages as the former freeway route, although along a different alignment and for much slower traffic, would therefore be desirable. The circumferential route would provide the park and stadium with regional access, while relieving the adjoining residential neighborhoods and Third Street from intrusion of traffic generated by these and other shoreline uses.



PROPOSED CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROADWAY

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CONCLUSION

This report only briefly reflects the complex issues which must be dealt with as planning and development of the park proceeds. Particular concerns expressed so far involve the relationship of the park to surrounding neighborhoods, traffic generation, local participation in the economic benefits resulting from park development and operation, and the extent and location of commercial activities within the park. If Shoreline Park development is to be successful, the cooperative participation of citizens, City Government, and the State is essential.

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